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STRENGTHENING OF SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN THE MEDITERRANEAN REGION

Letter dated 30 June 1992 from the Permanent Representative of Portugal to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of a declaration of the European Council of Ministers of the European Economic Community on the relations between Europe and the Maghreb, issued at Lisbon on 25 June 1992 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter and its annex circulated as an official document of the General Assembly under item 67 of the preliminary list.

(Signed) Fernando REINO
Ambassador of Portugal
Permanent Representative
to the United Nations

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ANNEX

Declaration of the European Council of Ministers of the European Economic Community on relations between Europe and the Maghreb, issued at Lisbon on 25 June 1992

The European Council of Ministers of the European Economic Community reaffirms its solidarity with the Maghreb countries and its firm determination to continue its overall policy of contributing to the stability and prosperity of the Mediterranean region on the basis of an approach favouring partnership.

The European Economic Community and its member States consider that their relations with the Maghreb countries must be founded on a common commitment to:

(a) Respect international law, the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the resolutions of the United Nations Security Council;

(b) Respect human rights and fundamental freedoms in civil, political, economic, social and cultural matters, as well as democtratic values, exemplified by free and regular elections;

(c) The establishment of democratic institutional systems guaranteeing pluralism, effective participation by citizens in the lives of their States and respect for the rights of minorities;

(d) Tolerance and coexistence between cultures and religions, the political dialogue between the Communtiy and its member States and the Maghreb countries should permit a regular exchange of information and greater mutual consultation on political and security matters. Similarly, the Community and its member States hope that this dialogue will as soon as possible extend to elected representatives and the social partners. The Community and its member States are also ready, at the appropriate time, to continue the dialogue entered into with the Arab-Maghrebian Union.

In the economic field, the European Council reiterates its support for the harmonious development of the Maghreb region with a view to its economic integration, the introduction of true market economies and the modernization of economic systems.

In this context, the European Council, mindful of the possibilities for action already dedided upon in the context of the Renovated Mediterranean Policy (RMP), to which the Community remains firmly committed, considers that a true Europe-Maghreb partnership should encourage the continuation of economic reforms and a substantial increase in private investment, and more particularly, joint ventures between firms in Europe and the Maghreb, with a view to promoting job-creating activities.

The European Council states that the Community is ready to play a full part in such an undertaking, in particular through financial cooperation,

especially in the context of the RMP, investment promotion, increased technical cooperation in all areas of common interest and ultimately, by stages, the setting-up of a free-trade area. The European Council notes that talks have already made it possible to explore this approach with Morocco and hopes that rapid progress can be made along these lines. It proposes that a similar approach be adopted towards other countries in the region.

In the social field, the European Council considers that priority consideration must be given to the problems raised on both sides of the Mediterranean by:

(a) Migration and the living and working conditions of migrant communities;

(b) Demographic imbalances and the attendant economic and social disparities.

In the cultural field, the European Council considers that more exchanges, in particular of young people, university students and staff, sciertists and those in the media, are vital for a better knowledge and mutual understanding of peoples and cultures in Europe and the Maghreb.

Through the progressive attainment of the objectives cited, in particular that of partnership, the European Council shows its firm determination to place relations between Europe and the Maghreb on a footing which, in scale and intensity, is commensurate with the links forged by geography and by history.